



Open Understory

Historic Spring Fire Season in South Florida 2 Large Fires in Big Cypress; Everglades NP Assists Miami-Dade

2011 FLORIDA FIRES

Big Cypress National Preserve

Jarhead Fire: April 26 to May 23
38,130 acres

Oil Pad Fire Complex: June 13 to 25
10,154 acres

Everglades National Park Assists:

Prison Fire: May 29
10.5 acres (non-NPS lands)

Prairie Fire: June 7 to 12
67,977 acres (non-NPS lands)

Background: Aerial photo of the Jarhead Fire, Big Cypress National Preserve.

Naples and Homestead, FL--Springtime wildfires are part of the normal change of seasons here in the lightning capital of America. But this year, a dry winter left the water level unusually low in the swamps, and the annual rains that always put out the spring fires came late. The resulting fire season challenged NPS firefighters at Big Cypress National Preserve and Everglades National Park.

Big Cypress conducted 2 prescribed burns and responded to 37 wildfires. The largest of these, dubbed the Jarhead Fire, demonstrated the success of annual prescribed burns in the Preserve. Several previous burns, including a 5,000-acre treatment last year, significantly reduced the amount of pine and palmetto. The thinner vegetation helped firefighters save several buildings and facilitated containment on the fire's northwestern flank.

At Everglades National Park, NPS firefighters assisted Miami-Dade Fire and Rescue in keeping two wildfires out of the park. Among other values at risk, an armory containing explosives and chemical agents kept by the Department of Homeland Security was threatened by the Prison Fire. The Prairie Fire, which was halted at Highway 41, threatened the Shark Valley Visitor Center and various buildings along the highway, including the Miccosukee Strip.

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND TRAINING

Aug. 15-19: Basic Firefighter Training: S130/190, NATR (Vicksburg, MS) e-mail mark_whipps@nps.gov

Aug. 16-17: North Carolina Prescribed Fire Council Meeting (Wilkesboro) <http://bit.ly/IS0DKK>

Aug. 24: CAFMS Workshop: Smoke Mgt. in So. Appalachians (Charlottesville, VA) <http://1.usa.gov/mG5fu2>

Sept. 20-22: 2nd Annual Shortleaf Pine Conference (Huntsville, AL) <http://bit.ly/mjvT6B>

For a complete list, check our SharePoint site at
<http://bit.ly/bYeP1L>

New Places and Faces

Cumberland Island welcomes their new **Fire Management Officer, Alton "Ode" Anderson**. Ode comes to CUIS from the Colorado River Valley Field Office of the BLM. The diplomatic skills he honed working with the communities of Vail and Aspen will come in handy for his new job. His first task: revise the CUIS fire management plan to incorporate prescribed fire. Ode looks forward to building the CUIS program: "I like to be challenged and have work to do."

Congratulations to two SER firefighters on promotions within their own units: **Shane Paxton** to **Assistant Lead on the Great Smokies Module** and **Justin Turnbo** to **Prescribed Fire Specialist at Big Cypress**. Good job, guys!

Great Smokies NP bids a fond farewell to outgoing **FMO Mark Taylor**. We wish him luck in his new position helping the Northeast Region develop a wildland fire module.

Everglades NP will also miss **Robert Trinca-do**. Congratulations on your new position as AFMO at Panther National Wildlife Refuge.

Mammoth Cave NP Delivers New Structure Engine to Park City VFD

Park City, KY--On March 25, MACA delivered a new fire engine, *Mammoth Cave 101*, to their partner Volunteer Fire Department in Park City, Kentucky. "We are most appreciative of our relationship with Park City and how they assist the park with structural fire response," said Superintendent Patrick Reed. "It simply isn't practical for our rangers to keep qualified in the required training and refresher courses. We share our truck with Park City, and in turn Park City volunteers respond to fires in the park."

Below: Park City Volunteer Firefighter Ronnie Stinson tests the deck monitor with MACA ranger Jonathan Bledsoe at the control board of *Mammoth Cave 101*.



Great Smoky Mountains Wildland Fire Module Now Hiring--Apply by July 21

Got wildland fire experience? Help restore and maintain fire-adapted ecosystems throughout the Southeast. Openings: lead crewmember (GS-6) and crewmember (GS-5). Apply through USAJobs at <http://1.usa.gov/mP7Pky>. GRSM also expects to announce their GS-12 FMO position soon, so keep an eye on USAJobs if you're interested!

Kings Mountain Firefighters Wield New Brush Hog

Fecon Mulcher Helps Build Fireline on Jarhead Fire at BICY, Firebreak at Cape Hatteras



Blacksburg, SC--In the autumn of 2010, the Southeast Regional Fire Management Program purchased a Fecon FTX 148, a low ground-pressure mower capable of mulching southern rough (photo at left.) Housed at Kings Mountain and operated by firefighter Alex Scronce, the Fecon has proved its usefulness building fireline and protecting structures on the Jarhead Fire at Big Cypress in May. It was also used to build a 1-mile long fuel break on Roanoke Island along the boundary of Fort Raleigh National Historical Park and private property in the Heritage Point Subdivision. The Fecon has also been used to help mutual-aid partners, such as the Francis Marion National Forest, treat Red Cockaded Woodpecker (RCW) habitat in areas where burning is impractical.